

Paper: Lancaster New Era (PA)

Title: CONVENTION CENTER SPARKS TENSIONS AGAIN

Date: November 8, 2000

A Lancaster County hotelier walked out of the meeting of the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority this morning after the officials threatened to have police remove him.

Peter Chiccarine, a manager of the Best Western Eden Resort Inn, had asked Convention Center Authority Board Chairman James O. Pickard for the opportunity to discuss an 80-page report released Tuesday by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP that recommended a larger, more expensive convention center for downtown Lancaster. Pickard replied that Chiccarine represents one of 11 county hotels and motels opposing the convention center project in a lawsuit due to be argued in court next month.

"You've got to make up your mind which jersey you're wearing, but you are not going to play for both teams -- not in my ballpark," Pickard said.

The authority chairman told Chiccarine to sit down. He also told Chiccarine he was out of order when he continued to question Pickard.

John Espenshade, the board solicitor, interjected that Chiccarine could either sit down or leave, and then told Eugene Duncan to call police when Chiccarine hesitated.

Afterward, Chiccarine said he had approached Pickard about the discussions the day before and Pickard told him to bring it up at today's meeting.

"He set me up," Chiccarine concluded.

"I did not tell him that I was in support of it, and I am not in support of it," Pickard said of the suggested round-table discussion. "Litigation is right around the corner and I'm not going to supply them with more information."